



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Timothy M. Kaine
Governor

September 28, 2007

LETTER TO VIRGINIA'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Dear:

Yesterday, I sent a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requesting that the entire Commonwealth of Virginia receive secretarial disaster designation. Under this designation, all farmers in Virginia would be eligible for consideration for any and all assistance provided through the USDA in response to the destructive drought that continues to ravage our state.

On a number of occasions this year I have written the Secretary on behalf of individual counties whose local governing bodies have requested my help in obtaining federal disaster designation and assistance to address losses impacting their farm families. It is now time to expedite the process for assessing Virginia's farm losses and to seek help for all those farm families who are experiencing pressures affecting their abilities to continue their operations.

I understand other neighboring states have already taken the step to seek statewide designation. Given the worsening drought conditions in Virginia, there is little or no hope that our farmers will be able to salvage much from this year's crops. I am therefore requesting that the Secretary and his staff move quickly to complete the assessment and designation of our state's localities—including all counties and independent cities.

As you and your colleagues consider ways that the federal government may help Virginia's farm families in this time of need, I hope you will keep in the mind that farmers need more than low interest loans from USDA to get through the challenges this year's drought has created. Given the broad impact of this year's drought, I hope Congress will have an interest in approving special legislation that would potentially provide direct financial assistance to help offset the losses that could have long-term negative economic consequences for Virginia's farm families.

As you know, agriculture is extremely important to Virginia, and maintaining a productive and viable agricultural industry is crucial to our nation's economy and environment. It is for these reasons that I hope you will give my request to support Virginia's growers and farm families full consideration.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Timothy M. Kaine

TMK:gmb

c: The Honorable Robert S. Bloxom, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry
The Honorable John W. Marshall, Secretary of Public Safety
Todd P. Haymore, Commissioner, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Michael M. Cline, State Coordinator, Department of Emergency Management
Jacquelin P. Easter, State Executive Director, USDA Farm Service Agency
Virginia Agribusiness Council
Virginia Farm Bureau Federation